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1950

Dismal Swamp Deer Hunt, pages 14-15

Volume XI
Number 1



Photo by A. R. Mitchell, Jr.

Winter Magic!

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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A Monthly Magazine for Higher Standards of Outdoor Recreation Through Wildlife Conservation

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

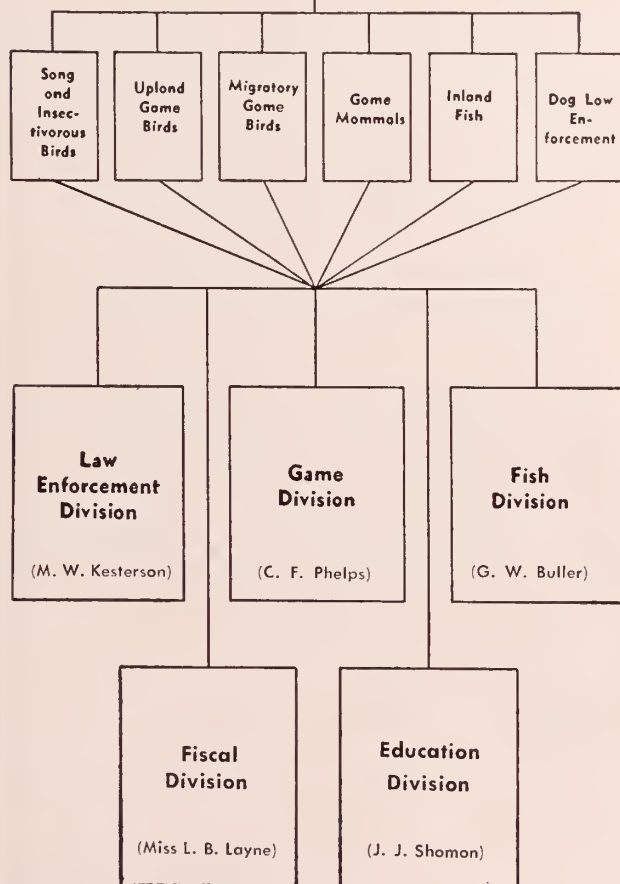


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COVER PHOTO

A Bobwhite quail finds a seed-bearing plant
 above the January snow. Photo by Lowary.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE gratefully receives for consideration all news items, articles, photographs, sketches and other materials which deal with the use, management and study of Virginia's interrelated, renewable natural resources:

WILDLIFE
 |
 SOILS — CONSERVE — WATER
 |
 FORESTS

Since wildlife is a beneficiary of the work done by State and Federal land-use agencies in Virginia, editorial policy provides for recognition of their accomplishments and solicitation of their contributions. Credit is given on material published. Permission to reprint is granted provided proper credit is given.

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J. J. Shomon, Editor

W. H. Mullins, Associate Editor

New Vistas for 1950 and Beyond

THE YEAR 1950 BRINGS us to the halfway mark of a great century. Almost overnight we have been thrown into an atomic age—an era of great complexity, overpopulation, industrial and agricultural development, and accompanying strife. New vistas are opening in every field of human endeavor, some good, some bad, and those of us in wildlife work cannot help but look to the future with anxiety.

During the past 50 years we have seen the wildlife of our land face one assault after another. Man has been the big influence. Back when Jamestown was a colony the human use pressure on our animal and plant life was small. Animal abundance was not adversely affected by man's activity. But today, 300 years later, the picture has vastly changed. We have grown from a handful of people to a mighty empire of 150 million. This almost geometric expansion of our human population has had a broad influence on our land and correspondingly upon the creatures abounding upon it. That we may expect a let-up in the trend of events in the next half century is unlikely. Rather we must prepare ourselves for an even faster tempo of things to come. It means that wildlife administrators, like those trying to regulate all other forms of natural wealth, will be in for some trying times.

The history of our bountiful wildlife as it once existed in North America and the causes of its gradual diminution are well known to everyone. When we permit ourselves to look into the future and judge the future by the past, we must reach the logical conclusion that free hunting in America can exist only through some very positive checks on our wildlife take and a determined effort at wildlife restoration. No meek, half-hearted attempts will do.

Hunting and fishing have been traditional in Virginia ever since its settlement. The wild creatures of the Old Dominion have been part and parcel of its richest history down through the years. It has been a vital and integral part of our social and cultural life. If our decimation of important wildlife species continues we must realize that with this loss there passes out of the picture much more than the loss of game itself. It means to this and to future generations the loss of some of the finest contributions to the health, happiness and culture of the people of Virginia.

The Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, from surveys, studies and reports, is convinced that the wildlife resources of the Commonwealth can only be safeguarded through the inauguration of a most positive and long-range wildlife conservation and restoration program. This program must be based largely on the management of lands and waters where wildlife lives and must mean further regulation of man's activities. The Commission through its wildlife experts and its staff of trained wardens and conservation officials is spending many thousands of dollars on game and fish improvement. The Commission supplies farmers with seeds, plants and fertilizers, and provides with the help of the Soil Conservation Service expert, instruction and advice on the proper utilization of these materials that will improve food and cover and breeding places for wildlife, and to protect the soil from erosion.

It is not good to take a dim view of the future with the beginning of a new year, and I do not wish to convey this impression. There is hope for the future of our wildlife but it will mean changed ideas, concepts, and our ways of doing things. Only Herculean efforts in the right direction can bring this about. We need greater emphasis on wildlife values, more research in the field of game and fish management—and human management—better and tighter law enforcement, more habitat improvement, and more education. We must accept the theory that the fate of our wildlife in agricultural and forest areas is inextricably tied in with land use, and that our only hope lies in a long-range, intelligent, and practical working program of wildlife rehabilitation.

We in Virginia are beginning to see our way clear in a definite program. May I commend to your reading and study this program as it appears on other pages of this issue of VIRGINIA WILDLIFE. It may not be the all-perfect program but we of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries feel it is a step in the right direction.

The help of every Virginia citizen is needed in this rehabilitation movement—the landowner, farmer, sportsman, businessman, educator, and the technical soil, water, forest and wildlife scientist. With this kind of cooperation the new vistas for the coming year and those beyond need not be dim, but bright and encouraging.

I. T. QUINN, *Executive Director.*



Soil conservation in the United States and Hugh Bennett are almost synonymous. As our nation's top leader in the battle against soil loss, Dr. Bennett has won the admiration of grateful Americans as well as the rest of the world. He heads the present-day crusading U. S. Soil Conservation Service.

Soil and Wildlife Conservation

By **H. H. BENNETT**

(Soil Conservation Service photos)

SOIL CONSERVATIONISTS and wildlife conservationists meet on common ground in the farm fields and woodlands of Virginia, and the nation. The soil conservation technician is a wildlife conservationist at heart and by training, as well as by assignment. The wildlife conservationist is also a soil conservationist, by the very nature of his business in developing wildlife habitats and in game and fish management. And the farmer, as our principal game manager, holds the key to application of soil and wildlife conservation practices alike.

There can be no sustained plant or animal life without a permanent base of soil and water. Without productive land, and the water that makes it produce, there can be no birds, fish, furbearers, or big game. Most of our life-giving soil is found on our farms. Most of the water that feeds our lakes and streams drains from or across these same farm lands. Thus the necessity of safeguarding our remaining soil and water resources is clear. The opportunities and responsibilities shared by all who aspire to the name of "conservationist" to devote their full energies to advancement of this vital work, likewise are abundantly clear.

This history of our exploitation and management of

the land, timber, wildlife, and other natural resources in the United States is too familiar to need retelling. It is not an enviable record. We Americans have permitted our land to undergo depreciation by soil erosion at a faster rate than any other nation we know anything about. We have allowed about half of the original supply of productive farmland in this country to be damaged by soil erosion, waterlogging, etc. — many millions of acres of it so severely damaged as not to be capable of further economic cultivation in the immediate future. And we still are losing around 500,000 acres of our productive land each year through the continuing ravages of soil erosion. Nor have the costly effects of this damaging process been confined by any means to the physical body of the land itself: siltation of lakes and reservoirs, silt pollution in our streams, and drying up or denuding of wildlife nesting or breeding areas are among them.

Nature's laws were so contrived that land, water, plants, and animals all should — and under natural conditions do — exist in harmony and interdependence for perpetual productiveness of these basic resources which distinguish the earth from a barren and sterile planet. So it likewise is a mandate of nature of precisely the same order that the land and water must be treated and used according to capability and need. It is nature's law which man too often has overlooked. Fortunately — on the favorable side of the account — we in the United States have in a few short years taken world leadership in soil and water conservation as such. We have entered the *soil conservation era*, in which conservation of land, water, forest, grass, crops, and wildlife are, for the first time in the history of man, being tied together and scientifically coordinated on the basis of land capability and need.



SOIL WASTE: We have allowed about half of the original supply of farmland in this country to be damaged by soil erosion. There can be little sustained plant and animal life where soil ravages are taking place.

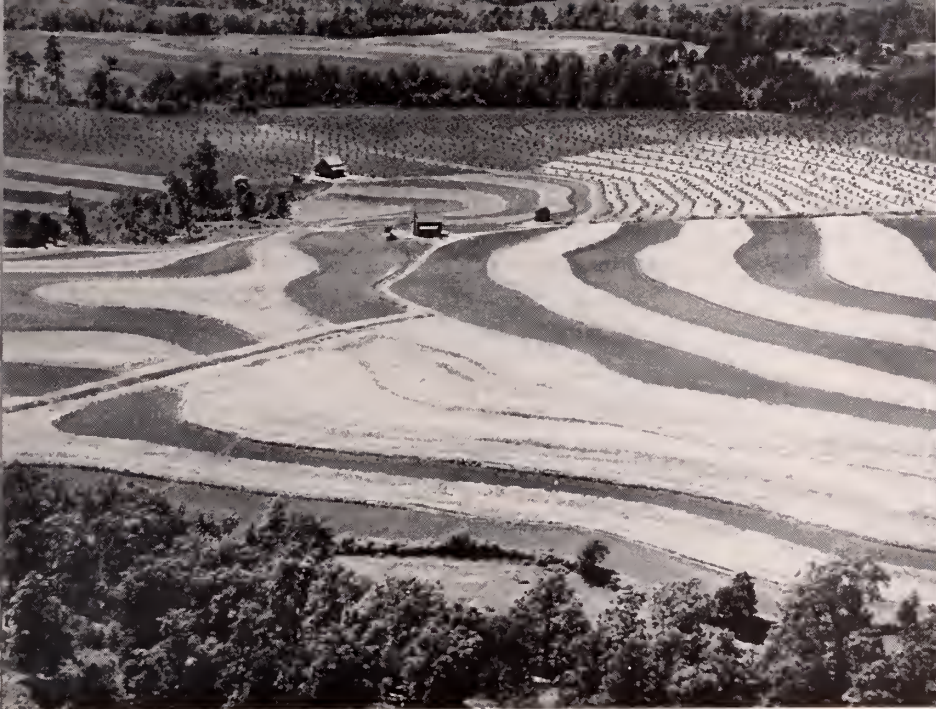
The practical application of this principle is being demonstrated on a progressively wider scale from year to year, in Virginia and all over the nation, notably in farmer-organized and farmer-managed soil conservation districts, with the technical assistance of the Soil Conservation Service and the important support of other conservation, educational, financing, and other interests. This modern, democratic approach, by enlisting the coöperative effort of land-holder, government, and the public together, is proving beneficial to individuals and the public alike. And our important wildlife resources are not the least to benefit from this modern soil conservation which is spreading across the nation with such steady and remarkable progress.

Modern soil conservation is based on sound land use and treatment of land with all the proven appropriate measures that are needed to keep it permanently productive while in use, whether that be for conventional crops and livestock, timber, or wildlife. It means terracing land that needs terracing; it means contouring, strip-cropping, and stubble-mulching the land as needed, along with supporting practices of crop rotations, cover crops, etc., wherever needed. It means gully control, stabilizing water outlets, building farm ponds, locating farm roads and fences on the contour, planting steep, erodible land to grass or trees, development of good pastures and devoting good management to them, and conservation management of farm woodlands. Where land is too wet, modern soil conservation calls for drainage—unless wildlife use appears to be the greater and more desirable need. If land is too dry, it calls for irrigation. And modern soil conservation calls, also, for the use of the best of the most adaptable varieties of crops as well as the most efficient tools available to farmers.

Virtually all of the Soil Conservation Service's technical and certain other assistance, including results of painstaking research, is made available to farmers through their soil conservation districts, at their request. More than three-fourths of the nation's farms now are within the boundaries of the nearly 2,200 soil conservation districts already established under state enabling laws, including approximately 1,180,000,000 acres. Eighty-six percent of the entire state of Virginia is covered by districts so far.

From the time the first conservation surveyor comes into a district with his soil auger until the conservation farm planner drives away from each completely planned and treated farm on which he has worked out in the fields with the farmer, the paramount consideration is the best interests and needs of the land and those who depend on its continued bountiful and economic production. That includes, besides the farm family and the community at large, the beneficial birds, animals, and fish which inhabit the land and its waters. The land capability surveys, for example, comprise a scientific, acre-by-acre land inventory which is the foundation on which rests effective conservation planning, treatment, and use of the land. That is why we are intent on pushing these surveys to completion throughout the country at the earliest date facilities will permit. Community and even wider benefits, including wildlife conservation, result through sound planning and use of the land in any given locality.

Thus the Soil Conservation Service's conservation needs estimates of 1945 showed that 33 million acres of farm and ranch land scattered over the country are best suited for wildlife production, including about 13 million acres which need specific biology practices with which the landholders need the help of soil conservationists,



PROPER LAND USE: Strip cropping and contouring (left) and stream bank improvement (right) are land management practices which yield monetary and wildlife dividends. Each parcel of land should be fitted for its best use.

wildlife technicians, and others. Some of the problems, such as streambank and spoil-bank management, are of broader, community, scope.

Meanwhile, by far the greater number of the various soil and water conservation measures used in needed combinations on the roughly 1,027,000,000 acres of land in farms primarily suited to production of cultivated crops, livestock, and wood products have definite wildlife benefits. These range from farm ponds to gully plantings, from contour strip cropping with the many "edges" which game birds and other wildlife love to field border plantings of bicolor and sercia lespedeza, from woodland and pasture improvement and protective management to planting of odd areas on the farm as wildlife food and shelter patches. Nearly 2 million acres on more than 18,500 Virginia farms in soil conservation districts so far have had this combined treatment. The individual practices have included, among others (to July 1, 1949), approximately 1,150 farm ponds and 1,150 fish ponds, 125,000 acres of strip cropping and 194,000 acres of cover cropping, 11,300 acres of wildlife area improvement, 450,000 acres of conservation woodland management, and 7,400 acres of tree windbreak planting.

Actually, the job has only been well begun. To finish it, and in time, is going to take the continued

unflagging teamwork of all of us—farmers, soil conservationists, wildlife conservationists, everybody. Such coöperative effort in Virginia has been conspicuous. For example, Virginia's Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries has maintained coöperative projects for quail in soil conservation districts longer than any other state, or since 1940, and has furnished districts sercia and bicolor lespedeza seed and plants for wildlife borders, in addition to working with our Service to develop earlier ripening shrub lespedeza strains which we will put into production plantings next year. Then there has been, to mention another example, the assistance given us by Dr. H. W. Jackson, associate biologist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, in correcting unprofitable fish populations and in weed control in farm ponds.

We must produce more game and more pounds of fish if we want better hunting and fishing. Virginia farmers—as key conservationists—have a great deal to say as to whether we shall have more or less. They can grow birds where none survive today, just as they are growing fish where there was no water before. Every hunter and fisherman can render a double service by encouraging landowners to practice modern soil conservation which pays such handsome dividends in game and fish production. The challenge is an inviting one. Together, we shall achieve real conservation.

In 1776 the average depth of topsoil over the entire United States amounted to approximately nine inches. By 1941, the average depth of topsoil was about six inches. All forms of life in the United States live from that six inches. Below that is desert, death and despair, and at the present rate of wasteful use of our soil we will reach that depth in about 50 years.

Mallards at Sunrise

By BILL MULLINS

A HEAVY PRE-DAWN MIST hung over the icy waters of the Tidewater river marshland. Its damp closeness seemed to press in from all sides, isolating the chilled Virginia lowlands from the rest of the world.

In the semi-darkness of the early hours, muffled sounds intermittently penetrated the saturated atmosphere. A slight but cutting breeze rustled the brown patches of frost-covered saw grass, crisp from a cold January night. From far up the river came the call of a lone hen mallard; it was answered by distant ducks somewhere in their secluded roosting grounds.

Shifting movements of cold air fanned the enfolding mists, which began to grow thin, revealing a world just emerging from its cloak of darkness. In the east the first traces of light made the skyline faintly discernible, but as yet darkness still reigned supreme over the morass. It was not even possible to locate a frightened mallard which sprang from the saw grass and winged off to a safer refuge.

In a matter of seconds the wind changed direction, making audible to human ears that which had intruded upon the duck's seclusion. From up where the marsh

*Two Virginia sportsmen locate the
ducks—the shooting was good but
it wasn't their greatest thrill*



joined the main river channel came occasional sounds of crunching ice. The disturbance kept moving closer and closer until it was clear that the grinding noises were produced by a boat breaking through the ice. As the craft neared the spot from which the mallard had flushed, its occupants became visible in the dim morning light—two hunters bent to the task of pushing their low-sided marsh boat through the tenacious grasses and patches of thin ice. Occasionally they would stop and rest from their back-breaking work. Each pause seemed to take longer than necessary, as they stood for several minutes watching ghostly forms of ducks that sped overhead on whistling wings.

After each pause they pushed on as if intent on filling some pre-determined rendezvous. It was growing lighter by the minute now and the eastern horizon took on a reddish cast. The men glanced towards the east, then vigorously renewed their efforts. Finally when it seemed that the tangle of grass would stop all progress the bow of their boat broke into a concealed pocket of water completely enclosed by protecting marsh foliage.

In a split second hundreds of black ducks and mallards rose from the surface of the pocket; their beating wings and surprised quacks created a sudden turmoil in the heretofore placid marsh. The hunters crouched low, watching the sleek birds through eyes that understood and appreciated the beauty of the scene unfolding before them. When the last duck had flushed, the men hastily but skillfully scattered decoys over an area adjacent to a little notch in the pocket. They quickly pulled their boat into the shielding grasses and settled down to expectant watchfulness.

They didn't have long to wait. The whistling of speeding wings caused them both to crouch even lower, then glance cautiously upward. High in the rose-colored sky slanting rays of sunlight glistened on white underparts of a dozen pair of set wings. The hunter in the bow grabbed his caller, and placing it to his lips produced the tantalizing notes of a hen mallard's "come in" call. As if waiting for that very signal the ducks tilted their wings and came sailing down. But they were still curious; their long necks moved back and forth and beady eyes searched the bobbing decoys for signs of danger.

Both men crouched, with heads bent, beneath screening foliage away from prying eyes. One hunter watched the circling birds through an opening in the grass, and as they turned over the far edge of the pocket he nudged his companion. This time, from his caller came the low "chuckles" of a mallard's feeding call. The dubious birds now seemed to lose all semblance of caution. They headed straight for the set on cupped wings, tilting from side to side to lose altitude. With one last flurry and thrashing of pinions they settled among the decoys.

Up to this time the two hunters had not lifted their guns. They still didn't budge as the birds swam around in the water, babbling and tipping, not over 15 yards from the hidden boat. Then a strange thing happened; at least it would have seemed strange to most people. The two hunters suddenly stood up and waved their arms. The ducks immediately leaped from the water and were soon winging off up the river.

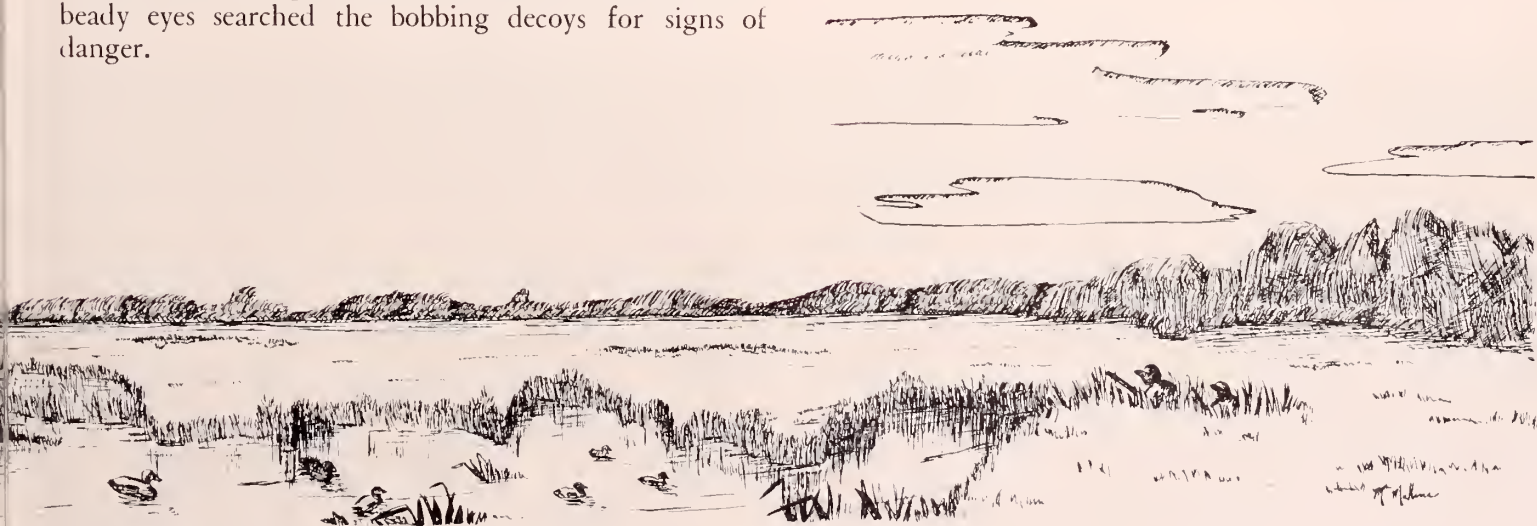
The men settled down again to watch and wait. By this time the January sun had cleared the horizon and wavering lines of ducks filled the sky. Within minutes several more flocks pitched in. Each time the hunters waited tensely while the curious mallards circled and finally after much coaxing, swung into the wind and lit. But presently the men stood up and as before, waved their arms and the ducks took off.

This queer performance continued until a huge drove showed interest. The hunters took one look and began talking in low tones. "John," whispered the one who had been using the duck caller, "I brought you to my favorite spot today because I know you are a real sportsman. You've gone along with me so far; now how about doing me another favor?"

"Anything you say, Dan," came the good-natured reply.

Dan peered through the grasses and watched the birds disappear over the horizon, then continued: "They'll

(Continued on page 22)



Virginia's Wildlife Program

Summarized

Purpose, Policy and Objectives

THE COMMISSION of Game and Inland Fisheries is charged by law with the protection and perpetuation of the fish and wildlife resources of the Commonwealth, and is expected to so manage these resources that they will benefit the widest number of people for the longest time, without danger to the existing supply.

To accomplish this avowed purpose the Commission has set into motion a program of protection, restoration and development based on the latest "know how" in the field of scientific wildlife management.

Basically the Commission believes that if we are to maintain existing supplies of fish and wildlife and have more and better hunting and fishing in the future, *WE MUST*:

- (1) Protect our existing game and inland fish by adequate law enforcement.
- (2) Increase all forms of wildlife which yield to the tools of wildlife management.
- (3) Maintain and wherever possible improve existing habitat for wildlife.
- (4) Restock by transfer from one area to another or by artificial propagation only such numbers of wildlife as may be needed for reproductive brood stock. Or in cases of fish, such numbers and species as may be needed to furnish brood stock and balance or supply recreational sport where otherwise little would exist.
- (5) Favor restrictions on take of wildlife consistent with good management.

LAW ENFORCEMENT means enforcing the game, inland fish, and dog laws. Wardens also work with landowners, sportsmen and schools.

- (6) Secure the most reliable information on game and fish management based upon research and put into practice only that which is sound, practical, and economical.
- (7) Help in every way to curb existing pollution of our State's inland waters.
- (8) Insist on wise and efficient wildlife administration and careful spending of monies from the "game protection fund."
- (9) Obtain wiser acceptance of conservation practices and aid in spreading more resources-use education among our people, especially the youth of the State.
- (10) Coöperate with individuals, clubs, and state and federal land-use agencies to attain these objectives.

Law Enforcement

Prior to July 1, 1948 the Commission had inadequate funds for the employment of sufficiently trained personnel to properly enforce the game and fish laws and regulations of the Commonwealth. But beginning July 1, 1948 the Commission was able to allow adequate travel expenses for wardens and to initiate a program of reclassification of all field officers who merit an increase in salary.

The Commission believes that the game warden should be adequately trained and qualified to perform the following important functions in his county:

- (1) Enforce the game, inland fish and dog laws and regulations based thereunder.

GAME RESTORATION depends largely upon habitat maintenance and restoration. Here, game technician in jeep plows wildlife strip.

Staff photos



- (2) To organize and assist hunters and fishermen in planning programs of activity, and to secure their coöperation in wildlife protection, restoration and development.
- (3) To visit the schools and discuss the value and benefits of wildlife to the community.
- (4) To work out with farmers and landowners the application of wildlife management practices.
- (5) To foster organized wildlife activities among 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts, and other clubs.
- (6) To organize interested groups to assist in planting fish and game supplied by the Commission.

In order to give expert training in the foregoing, the Commission, during 1949, established a School for Wardens at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. This School is designed to train game wardens in the techniques of game management, in the work of public relations, and in the development of an active interest among all the people in the protection, restoration and development of the State's wildlife.

Game Program

The Game Division program and policy is based upon the sound principle of habitat maintenance and restoration. Game species can exist or increase only to the limits of suitable habitat or favorable environment.

Recent Developments

- (1) Acquisition of a 2,800-acre farm in Orange County to be developed as a demonstration area for the production of farm game.
- (2) Steady increase in State's deer herds. The 1948-49 bag kill showed a 32 percent increase over the previous year.
- (3) Accelerated wild turkey restoration program. More high quality wild turkeys were stocked during 1948-49 than ever before.
- (4) Restoration of State's beaver to 31 counties; extinct in the State up to 1932.

FISHERIES RESTORATION is based mainly on restocking game fish in suitable waters.
Results—better fishing, improved brood stocks.

- (5) Substantial restocking of raccoon and rabbits in areas needing brood stock.
- (6) Establishment of 7,000 food and cover plantings for quail and rabbits on privately-owned lands. Bicolor lespedeza nursery established in 1947.
- (7) Completion of three waterfowl feeding and resting areas in Tidewater Virginia.
- (8) Employment of eight trained wildlife biologists for game management work.

Future Program

- (1) Continuation and expansion of present efforts to produce more farm game.
- (2) Further intensified coöperation with farmers and the Soil Conservation Districts for the establishment of more permanent food and cover patches.
- (3) Develop present bicolor lespedeza nursery to produce all future seed and plants.
- (4) Accelerate game management program for ruffed grouse, wild turkey, squirrel and deer on the 1,500,000 acres of national forests public shooting ground.
- (5) Restock the few remaining counties needing deer and try to double annual bag kill within three years. Emphasis to be on habitat improvement and management.
- (6) Continue present program and increase production of wild turkey until all suitable habitat in 30 presently closed counties are stocked and open to shooting.
- (7) Continue restocking program of beaver, raccoon and rabbits, but only in areas where brood stock is deficient.
- (8) Acquire and develop marsh land for public waterfowl shooting in the State.
- (9) Add to staff of trained men to supervise development of game management projects.

Fish Program

Virginia's Fish Program is largely based on the

EDUCATION is an all-important phase of the wildlife program. Virginia's citizens, particularly our youngsters, must be taught conservation.



premise that restocking of game fish provides more and better fishing and that it is a means of improving the native brood stocks. In the case of trout, it provides a grand type of sport fishing where almost none would exist. Three big fish hatcheries and one rearing station are turning out hundreds of thousands of large-size game fish which are not only adding to the number of fish caught, but are also improving the strains of fish. Virginia's fish program is briefly summarized below:

Recent Activities

- (1) Expansion of Front Royal fish hatchery with construction of a series of ponds, increasing production of smallmouth bass, rock bass, and sunfish by 25 percent.
- (2) Expansion of Stevensville hatchery by addition of several large ponds, increasing largemouth bass production, blue gill bream, and crappies by 20 percent.
- (3) Accelerated trout production at Marion hatchery by the construction of one large and six smaller ponds. Trout restocking of State's 132 trout streams has continued.
- (4) Extensive repairs to Airfield Pond, a public fishing lake of 150 acres.
- (5) Construction of first of a series of public fish ponds. Pond construction in Mecklenburg County inundated 157 acres and was liberally stocked with legal-size fish. Open to fishing in 1950.

Future Program

- (1) Numerous anticipated surveys to determine best location of next four large public fishing lakes, one to be constructed each year during next four-year period.
- (2) Added pond construction at Stevensville fish hatchery to increase hatchery output by 50 percent. Home for manager and other buildings also under construction.
- (3) Enlargement of Montebello trout rearing station so as to increase carrying capacity by 50 percent. Trout are brought as fingerlings from Marion to Montebello and kept until released in public streams.
- (4) New fish hatchery planned for smallmouth bass, rock bass and longear sunfish in Southwest Virginia. Hatchery is expected to double the output of game fish in this area. Construction of biological laboratory also planned.

Education

More Education is needed in wildlife conservation and sound "resources use" management. The Commission's educational program has been geared in this direction. Summarized below are shown some of the more important post-war activities, together with the far-reaching new educational program just put into effect.

Post-War Progress

- (1) Re-publication of Commission's magazine VIRGINIA WILDLIFE.
- (2) Printing and distribution of other publications, including mammal book and illustrated booklets on Commission's program and Virginia game birds, mammals and fish.
- (3) Lithographing and distribution of 4,000 posters on safety with firearms and game conservation.
- (4) Start of news service to press and clubs of the State. (Executive Director's *Educational Bulletin*.)
- (5) Inauguration of film loan service to schools and clubs. A library of 25 conservation films has been established; also one new 16 mm., 35-minute film in sound and color on the State's wildlife has been produced with the coöperation of the Board of Education.
- (6) Promotion of yearly wildlife essay contest in the public schools; also other close liaison work of conservation education nature with schools and teachers.
- (7) Regular weekly radio broadcasts over one Richmond station; also the initiation of monthly wildlife television program.

Projected Future Program

After much study and thought the Commission on July 1, 1949, dissolved the old Publications Division and in its place set up a model Education Division with four staff sections: publicity and publications, circulation and distribution, audio-visual aid, and special services. These sections are expected to:

- (1) Improve the quality of VIRGINIA WILDLIFE and increase its paid circulation.
- (2) Publish additional bulletins and pamphlets on the State's wildlife for use in schools and clubs. Expand present information program by additional press and radio news releases.
- (3) Expand audio-visual educational activities, not only still photographs and color slides, but the production of wildlife conservation motion pictures. The movie program is already well on its way under the direction of a highly skilled motion picture producer-director.
- (4) Closer educational liaison with schools, State Board of Education and land-use agencies. To accomplish this purpose a trained wildlife conservationist will be employed for a field mobile motion picture lecture service.
- (5) Broadening of weekly wildlife radio programs and their use over nine prominent Virginia radio stations.
- (6) Greater use of portable exhibits at schools and public gatherings.
- (7) Annual poster education campaign on safety with firearms and wildlife.

(Continued on page 22)



AN APPEAL is made to all sports-men and conservationists in Virginia to help put across the Third Wildlife Essay Contest in public schools of the State. Parents should encourage their boys and girls to participate. A final notice of the contest can be found on the inside back cover of this issue.

CONVICTIONS for game and fish law violations during the first five months of the 1949-50 fiscal year exceeded last year's convictions for the same period by 322. From July 1 through November 1948 there were 1956 judgments levied against game and fish law violators. This year, a total of 2278 convictions are recorded in the game warden reports for the same number of months.

SPORTSMEN from all over the State are reporting that more game is being found this year than in a long time. Their general opinion seems to be that the improved hunting can be attributed to the preceding mild winter and to the Commission's and cooperating agencies' forest and farm game habitat improvement program.

DEER KILLS west of the Blue Ridge exceeded the kill last year for the same area by 226 animals. Hunters bagged 1723 deer last year as against 1949 for this hunting season.

Officials of the George Washington National Forest stated that although there were fewer illegal deer killed this year a larger proportion of the illegal kills was reported. Over 300 licenses were checked on the Forest by Game Manager Goldie Smith without his finding a single infraction of the requirements.

AUTHORITIES of the Shenandoah National Park have notified the Game Commission that in the future they will not allow any legal size trout to be stocked in streams of the National Park. Since it is the Commission's policy to stock trout seven inches or over this ruling means that no trout can be planted in the Shenandoah National Park by the Game Commission next season.

This ruling will not interfere with the planting of trout in streams bordering Park land and in streams on private lands just outside the boundary.

STARTING JANUARY 1 the Commission's Special Services Section head, Ronald T. Speers, will begin a regularly scheduled series of programs in schools, clubs, and civic groups of the State. He will devote the major part of his time during the first six months to the Tidewater area.

STOCKING of large and smallmouth bass, longear sunfish, rock bass, bream and crappie has recently been terminated for this year. It was a splendid year for the sunfish and the smallmouths with approximately 150,000 sunfish and 75,000 smallmouth bass being planted in Virginia waters. Around 40,000 rock bass, 125,000 largemouth bass, 200,000 bream, and 40,000 crappie were released. An estimated 25 percent of the smallmouth bass and 50 percent of the largemouth bass released were legal size.

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, Oscar L. Chapman, reports that the hunting license sales in the United States for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1949, rang up new record-breaking totals both in the number sold and in revenue received.

During the 1948-49 shooting seasons hunters paid \$34,966,687 for an all-time record total of 12,758,698 licenses. The previous year's sales amounted to \$29,814,327 with 11,391,810 licenses sold.

Virginia ranked 18th among the States in resident hunting license sales and 12th in the sale of non-resident licenses. Seventeen other states took in more revenue from hunting licenses than Virginia. We ranked 33rd in duck stamps sold.



Hunt starts with release of pack of good deer dogs. Man with rifle on left is E. C. Calhoon, president of the Tri-County Sportsmen's Club. M. A. Parker holds dogs.



Much of Dismal Swamp is too wet for hunting. Water drains out of Lake Drummond in many directions. This is the Feeder Ditch.



Members of the Big Entry Deer Club pose with medium size buck in the heart of the swamp. Club has cabin at junction of Cross and Portsmouth Ditches.



The country looks inviting enough. Photos by J. L. ...

Dismal Swamp

These pictures show a typical day with a hunt. The Big Entry Deer Club of 30 members depicted the northeastern section of the swamp. This area is full of deer. Club has bagged 35 deer this season. in Norfolk County, Virginia.

Club members hang up deer for dressing after the hunt. If he wants it. Successful hunter gets his pick as big as in rest of state. Hunters think it is a good thing.





but going is tough, treacherous.

Shomon.

Deer Hunt

deep in Virginia's Great Dismal Swamp. where hunts over 6,000 acres of private land in e, burned over in 1941, is rough, wet, but full ore last year; hunts during the open season oer 1, November 30.

each hunt. Each man will get a share of the venison sully a hind quarter. Deer do not run quite as e to restricted foods and lack of calcium.



Top photo: E. C. Sanderlin of the Big Entry Deer Club scans the swamp for a buck. Shooting with rifle is permitted in Norfolk County provided gunner is 15 feet above ground. Bottom photo: Gene Reel of Deep Creek, Virginia, drags in his four-pointer.

Timely Tips to Trappers

INTELLIGENT TRAPPING METHODS AND CAREFUL PELT HANDLING
WILL MEAN EXTRA DIVIDENDS TO THE TRAPPER

VIRGINIA TRAPPERS will find January a welcome month. The fur season is in full swing and the pelts will have a primeness such as only cold weather can bring. When the "freeze" sets in trappers would do well to re-examine their technique of taking and handling furs, as it will save them money and many hours of arduous work.

Every year hundreds of thousands of dollars are lost to trappers because of poor trapping technique and because pelts are improperly skinned, fleshed, stretched and dried, not to mention the taking of unprime skins. This represents a big loss not only to the trapper but to the fur industry, and is poor conservation. When the surplus of fur animals is improperly harvested it is like any other crop, a serious loss occurs to the individual and the community. Some timely tips to trappers, therefore, might not be amiss at this season. Helpful hints are everywhere available: from the fur industry itself, like the American Fur Merchants' Association, or from the various fur houses themselves. One of the more useful leaflets regularly put out for the trappers is Sears-Roebuck's *Tips to Trappers*, sent out free to anyone upon request. The Animal Trap Company of America at Lititz, Pennsylvania, has an attractive booklet *How to Catch More Fur* which is a most useful publication. Dozens of other firms and raw fur companies issue

similar information, most of it available free upon request.

Trappers would do well also to get in touch with federal and state wildlife agencies and obtain copies of trapping manuals and other helpful publications on fur handling.

For general information on trapping technique and pelt handling, the following may prove helpful to the trapper.

Trapping—Following the trapline is one of the most fascinating, healthful, and profitable of all outdoor sports. Today as in the days gone past, trapping is still one of the major professions in the country. It contributes widely to the nation's economy and rates as a hundred million dollar industry.

The craft and science of catching fur animals is something that comes only through experience. The best advice that can be given to the amateur is that he first learn the habits and ways of wildlife through study. This should be both in the field and from several good books on the subject. One of the best trapping manuals published in the last century is *Trapping* by McCracken and Van Cleve, and published by A. S. Barnes Company in New York.

The most important thing to remember in trying to be a successful trapper is that you know the animal

Following the trapline is one of the most fascinating, healthful, and profitable of all outdoor sports.

Photo by C. H. Peery



A successful trapper must study the habits of animals. This trapper is inspecting a muskrat house.

Staff photo by Shomon



being sought after. In this way you must learn to be a naturalist . . . know where fur animals frequent, how they live, their ranges, dens, and something of their feeding and mating habits. These are the basic fundamentals that make for a successful trapper.

Furbearers should be taken only when the fur is prime. This is not only good sense, it is good conservation. Animals being trapped should be handled as humanely as possible and needless suffering avoided. Traps that kill quickly or permit quick death should be favored. Traps should be visited every 24 hours (this is the law in Virginia) and all sets should be in the best of shape at all times if animals are expected to be taken. Trappers should always remember the four following rules in trapping:

- (1) Trap only in season and only when the fur is prime.
- (2) Take no more than the law allows and obey all game and fur regulations.
- (3) Remember to practice conservation in your fur take, leaving enough animals for "seed."
- (4) Visit traps regularly, avoid needless suffering to animals, and learn good fur handling technique.

Pelt Handling—Correct pelt handling only takes a little time, and you can get full profit from your trapline by handling your furs correctly. The first two steps apply to all kinds of furs. They are: (1) Remove all blood and dirt with a clean cloth repeatedly rinsed out in lukewarm water, and dry with a clean cloth. Some trappers also comb and brush the fur after they have allowed it to dry. (2) With a sharp knife, cut around the hind paw pads and slit up *backs of the hind legs* to base of the tail, and work skin carefully from the hind legs of the animal. The tail should be handled carefully. In certain cases it should be cut off, but in others it is left on and is handled in one of two ways: Either the tail bone is worked out without splitting the tail skin, or the tail is split to the end and held in a flat

position when stretched. (A good way to split tails is to slide an umbrella rib into tail, and insert a very sharp knife point into the groove which is used as a guide.) To hold split tails flat while drying, lay a strip of small mesh chicken wire against tail skin, and fasten the mesh to the board on each side of tail with staples. This permits complete drying. These instructions apply to handling both "cased" and "open" pelts.

Having handled the pelt properly up to this point, it is then handled either "cased" or "open" according to the variety of animal. Skins that are "cased" are removed from the carcass by peeling the pelt off like pulling off a sock, and are then shaped on stretchers with the straight sides and one end tapered. Pelts that are handled "open" are removed from the carcass by slitting down the center of the belly, and stretched by tacking them on a wall, a board or other flat surface.

Cased Pelts—The first step in "cased" handling is to hang the carcass by the hind feet, and peel the skin downward from the body. Work right along with a good sharp knife to remove the pelt, keeping it free of flesh and fat. Be careful when cutting around the nose, the ears and the eyes. After skinning, slip the "cased" pelt loosely over the scraping board, *fur-side in*, and with a dull edge such as an old knife or a sharpened lath, scrape the skin from head to tail. Remove all surplus fat and flesh, but don't scrape too close. (As a tool for scraping any "cased" pelt, it is a good idea to have a few split sections of log handy in assorted sizes. These should be first split, with one side rounded and the other side flat. After the bark has been peeled, the exposed wood should be carefully smoothed, and dry.)

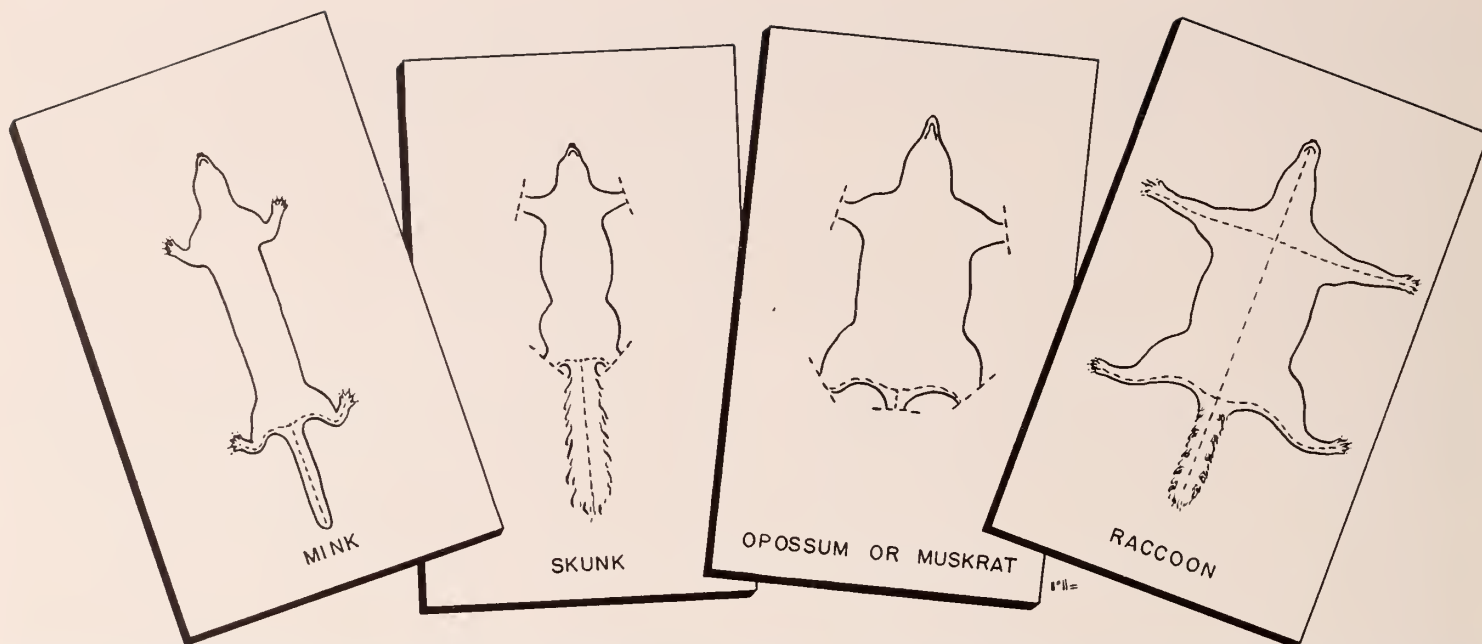
After scraping, place the pelts on stretchers that will shape them to natural size, barely taking up the slack and tacking neatly at the butt end. Pelts will tighten up as they dry. "Stretching" means helping skins to retain their proper shape and size while drying. Over-stretching

There is a definite technique in setting traps which gets results. A trap is set here so that the captured animal will quickly drown.

Care should be exercised in the skinning operation. Hang carcass by hind feet and peel skin carefully downward.

Staff photos by Shomon





The first three diagrams show pelts that should be “cased” — the pelt is peeled off like pulling off a sock. The raccoon pelt is handled “open” by slitting along belly and inside of front legs. Dotted lines outline cuts.

will prevent normal shrinkage, and care must be taken not to spoil pelts when using this method.

Certain “cased” pelts are handled skin-side-out, others are finished fur-side-out. Those finished fur-side-out should be taken off the stretchers before they are thoroughly dry. Turn them fur-side-in, put back on stretchers, and finish drying. In all other respects these pelts are handled like those finished skin-side-out.

Open Pelts—Pelts that are handled “open” are removed from the carcass by slitting pelt down the center of the belly from the mouth to the tail; also down the *inside of the front legs* (having already slit down the back of the hind legs.) Never cut off heads, or slit up the back of the pelt.

The pelt is then stretched by tacking on a wall or board with the fur side *toward* the board, exposing flesh side to the air. Excess fat should be removed by scraping with a dull-edged knife or sharp lath, as in “cased” pelt. Tacking should be done only along edges of skin. “Open” pelts are shaped either square or round.

Remember to take care of your traps after the season is over. Today, although more steel and better traps are available than for some time, conservation is still important. To avoid rust, at the end of each season carefully clean and oil your traps; some trappers like to boil them in a tub of water along with some black walnut hulls, soft maple bark, or butternut bark. Store them indoors.



Animal Tracks in the Snow

ALTHOUGH the weather is highly unpredictable, in all probability snow will blanket the Virginia countryside several times during the month of January. There's nothing more beautiful than to watch the soft flakes float down out of a leaden sky covering the largest mountain to the smallest twig. Even unsightly scars which man has left on the landscape are erased.

It is indeed a new world which, in its white cloak, offers many intriguing experiences. Not the least of these is the enjoyment obtained in observing and studying animal tracks in the snow.

Even when there is no snow a close observer will notice the footmarks of animals in soft earth along a stream. Elsewhere little feet pass over the solid ground leaving no telltale marks. But after a snow it is amazing to see the countless tracks that crisscross fields and woods. These tracks all tell a story. They vary in size, shape

and pattern, which not only identify the animals but help to disclose the everchanging pattern of life.

At the base of the big den tree in your favorite woods you may find where a squirrel barely escaped the hungry jaws of a red fox. Or the bear-like footprints of a skunk will trace the little animal from his snug bed under an old tree root to the spot where he dug out a fat mouse for his breakfast.

Animal tracks in the snow frequently do not have the details of prints made in soft earth, but nevertheless it is possible to identify them by their general shape, size and pattern. By studying the illustrations below, a knowledge of the tracks of several common Virginia animals can be gained. With a little practice you can learn their characteristics so well that a jaunt in the snow will hold many more pleasures and will be of greater significance.

Study the tracks of these common Virginia animals and watch for them the next time it snows.



RED FOX



BEAVER



RACCOON



OPOSSUM



SKUNK



OTTER



SQUIRREL



MINK



WEASEL



Karl Moslowski from National Audubon Society

The Weasel: Vandal or Vampire

By MAJOR NEIL PAYNE

AMONG PEOPLE interested in wildlife, any discussion of the weasel invariably dwells upon the most remarkable characteristic of that infamous tribe. He is a killer, and is often given the name Mister Murder.

The first impulse of an observer is to shower unbridled hatred on the name of weasel. Because of his furious attacks which might spell death to as many as forty chickens in a single night, he has become an arch-villain in the minds of people who witness the effects of his bloodthirstiness. Because of the toll he takes in rabbits, squirrels and birds, hardly a sportsman is counted among his friends. After all, what could be said in defense of an animal that spreads destruction through the woodland for the pure joy of killing?

Let's take a look at his diet. It should give us some clues about the weasel's true character. Now if he should happen to devour certain species which some of us think undesirable then that would at least be a talking point for the defendant. High on his list of preferred foods are mice, rats, frogs, insects and snakes. Most of us dislike mice, rats, some insects and a few snakes. Score one for Mister Murder!

Because of his way of life, the weasel is classed as

a predator. As a result there are many lovers of nature who reason that the over-all picture of wildlife would be rosier following the death of the last of his tribe. However, experience in game management indicates that such a result cannot always be expected. If this great enemy of the mouse were removed, it is reasonable to believe that mice would exist in greater abundance than before. The same might be said in the case of snakes and insects. Mice eat seeds . . . so do quail. More mice . . . less seed for quail . . . less quail.

Widespread interest in wildlife management is a comparatively recent thing. In past years the well-meaning efforts of pioneers in the field included the reduction of certain species below critical levels. Almost without exception such action resulted in serious trouble sometimes bordering on disaster. The best information currently available indicates that the "balance of nature" is best when left without too much alteration. Wildlife experts would now frown on the extermination of the weasel.

Most of us agree that the animal is no sport. His innate desire to kill is as much a part of him as his heartbeat. His ruthless slaughters are the sorrow of a

conservationist. But, in a different light, we may see some good in his wanton ways. For example, the part of his hunting bag he does not use is left to the less aggressive wild hunter.

Mister Murder is a symphony in steely muscles, lithe form and evil intent. Larger members of the family reach a length of 16 inches and have slim bodies, long necks and short legs. Smaller weasels measure only 7 inches when full-grown. All are superbly fitted to invade the retreats of their victims.

In northern latitudes Dame Nature abets the hunting weasel by turning his coat to white. When snow blankets the land he is all but indistinguishable and pursues his prey in the new "ermine" disguise. Only the black tip of his tail retains the characteristic rich brown summer fur. This magic is performed in such a manner that it still baffles the student of nature. Opinion is divided as to whether the individual hairs become white or a new coat grows to replace the one of brown.

Since the weasel is a close relative of the skunk, it is not surprising to learn that he is equipped with scent glands very much like those of his cousin. As a rule the placid skunk uses this offensive weapon to discourage enemies, but the more aggressive weasel does not use it as the sole means of defense. However, a thoroughly aroused weasel creates an aroma that is often considered stronger and more offensive than that of the wood pussy.

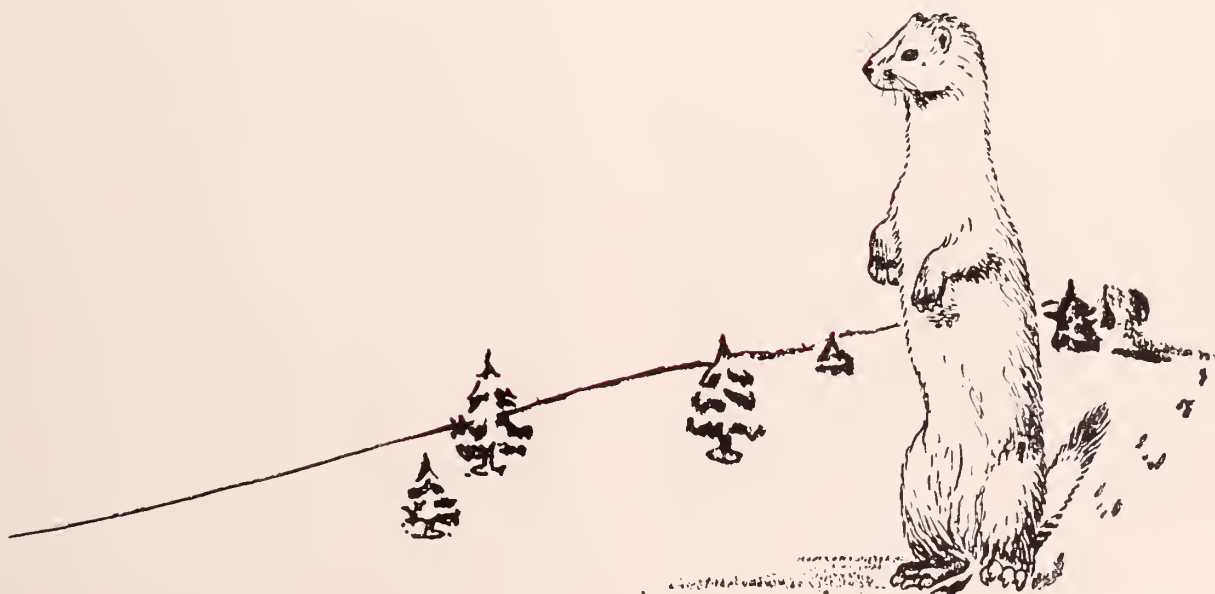
The usual litter of four to six young should consider themselves most fortunate. Their mother spares no effort in their defense and is diligent in training them to care for themselves. An unusually large litter may have eight members, and the extra burden on the parent is clearly evident as she scampers about attending to their schooling and administering the discipline for which she is noted. Even when they surpass her in size, none of her authority is yielded, and an errant offspring is sometimes thoroughly thrashed for insubordination.

On the prowl the weasel travels in a series of bounds, frequently pausing and rising to his full height to look about. He creates a credible likeness of a serpent as he stands with head swaying to and fro on his long, supple neck. When food is in sight his attack is seldom matched for swiftness and viciousness in the animal kingdom. He attacks at the throat or the base of the skull and, with needle-like teeth powered by massive jaw muscles, quickly subdues his prize. When enemies are in sight he speeds to the nearest cover, but soon pops his head out to get a better view of his foe. Only the fox, lynx, large owl, or his own cousins the mink, marten and fisher have any desire to engage him in combat. However, tales are told of the savage struggles of one weasel with another. Even a litter-mate may reach weasel paradise through the wrath of an unpredictable brother.

Trappers do not consider the weasel an animal hard to trap. However, because of a strong will to live and a wiry, muscular body, he is hard to dispatch before being removed from the trap. Pelts are much in demand, with good brown pelts bringing from \$2.50 to \$3.35 in recent years. Season after season they bring in better than \$1,500,000 to the trappers of this country and almost as much to those of Canada.

Many states still have bounties on the weasel. Pennsylvania has spent nearly a half million dollars on bounties, varying from 50 cents to \$1 per head (\$80,000 in 1947.) Pelts taken when fur is not prime result in a loss to the trapper and to the furrier. Thus the payment of bounties is being seriously questioned.

Nowadays the status of the weasel is being viewed in the light of better and more complete information regarding his life habits and their effect on his animal neighbors. Because of his value as a fur bearer and because of the balance he helps to maintain among creatures of the wild, it appears that judgment on the weasel should be withheld until he has had a fair trial.



MALLARDS AT SUNRISE

(Continued from page 9)

be back before long," he predicted. "Now about that favor. I've been coming to this little pocket every Saturday since the season opened, early like today. I sure get a big kick out of being in the marshes at dawn, seeing the sun come up and watching these mallards come in. It kind of gets next to a fellow; I reasoned that if I didn't just blast 'em to high heaven they would hang around and I'd be able to enjoy mornings like this all season. So, I resolved to shoot only twice on each hunt to keep from scaring 'em away. That's what I'm asking you to do this morning."

"It's a deal," said John, grinning from ear to ear, "after what I've seen today I know exactly how you feel."

"Good enough. Let's take our shots on the next bunch that comes in."

The agreement was no sooner reached than the big drove which had made one pass over the set broke into view. Both hunters ducked low, and again the enticing feeding call produced results. The mallards made several trial runs, then started in. This time the cold, blue steel of gun barrels inched up through brown foliage. The birds swung low, unaware of the reception awaiting them. They clamored excitedly to the decoys as wings were set for the final approach. The two figures didn't move a muscle until the ducks lowered their landing flaps and dropped their bright orange feet, then gun barrels came up in unison. One blast caught a mallard drake just as he was reaching for the water. Another shot from the same gun crumpled a hen that had flared just above the drake.

The second gunner methodically waited for two black ducks to gain altitude and square away in flight. He swung with the crossing birds with cool deliberation. His gun belched once, twice, and two ducks pitched end over end and struck in a shower of spray.

It all happened in a matter of seconds—four shots, four clean kills. Not another shot was fired, and once again all was quiet except for the swish of wings over the marsh. As if sensing that the danger was over ducks began returning to the pocket. The men sat motionless, silently taking in that which meant more to them than a full bag limit. After several minutes they gathered up the dead birds, picked up their decoys, and began leisurely making their way out of the marsh.

As the two Virginia sportsmen turned their boat homeward that January morning it signaled the end of a perfect hunt. On their clean-cut faces were looks of complete satisfaction, but not because of the ducks killed, although they did enjoy the shooting. It was because of their love of the hunt and everything connected with it. To them, the smell of marshes at dawn, the majestic grace of a circling mallard, and the eloquence of a morning sunrise filled to overflowing the cup of a sportsman's desire.

VIRGINIA'S WILDLIFE PROGRAM SUMMARIZED

(Continued from page 12)

Breakdown of the Commission's Expenditures

Source of Funds

Monies expended by the Game Commission are derived from the sales of hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses, 15 percent of the income from dog licenses, federal aid, (Pittman-Robertson funds), and the sale of publications and other miscellaneous items. No public tax money is used by the Game Commission in its wildlife conservation work and its activities are entirely self-supporting. The Commission also contributes to the "State Literary Fund" by enforcement "fines." Last year this amounted to \$55,135.

Actual Expenditures, Fiscal Year 1948-1949

<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Amount Spent</i>	<i>Percent of Grand Total</i>
Law Enforcement	\$ 418,558	40.00
Game Division	283,730	27.12
Fish Division	150,427	14.38
Capital Outlays	87,247	8.34
Education Division	42,700	4.08
Fiscal Division	30,320	2.90
Administration	28,441	2.72
Property Maintenance	4,856	0.46
Grand Total	\$1,046,279	100.00

Proposed Expenditures for the Biennium 1950-1952

<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Amount to be Spent</i>	<i>Percent of Grand Total</i>
Law Enforcement	\$1,092,971	36.34
Game Division*	1,025,759	34.11
Fish Division	389,318	12.94
Education Division	190,906	6.35
Capital Outlays	174,750	5.81
Administration	61,926	2.06
Fiscal Division	60,386	2.01
Miscellaneous	11,420	0.38
Grand Total	\$3,007,436	100.00

* Of the \$1,025,759 to be spent by the Game Division an estimated \$352,000 will come from Federal Pittman-Robertson funds, leaving a balance of \$673,759 to come from the sources listed above.



FARM FISH PONDS GROWING IN ABUNDANCE

Farm Fish Ponds provide increased opportunity for recreational fishing, the Fish and Wildlife Service reports. Twenty million people fish in the United States and spend well over a billion dollars a year on fishing licenses and equipment. All of this in spite of the fact that waters suitable for fishing has gradually decreased.

This has caused farm fish ponds to become of great importance from the point of view of anglers. Prospective "fish farmers" should seek help from their conservation agencies for help in planning fish ponds, and the Fish and Wildlife Service will provide the fish stock when the pond is constructed.

POPULAR WATERFOWL BOOK AVAILABLE

North American Waterfowl, by Albert N. Day,

Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Published by Stackpole and Heck, Inc., Telegraph Press Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1949. Price \$4.75.

This is probably the first book to be devoted exclusively to American waterfowl administration, and Mr. Day is certainly qualified to prepare such a work. The early history of waterfowl management, the jobs of the fly way biologists, the work of federal game management agents, the story of the development of the refuge system, the growing position of states in the waterfowl management program and the Mexican waterfowl situation all are discussed in detail.

GABRIELSON RECEIVES AUDUBON MEDAL

Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, president of the Wildlife Management Institute and internationally recognized as one of the world's greatest conservationists, recently was awarded the coveted Audubon Medal "for distinguished service in saving the nation's natural resources." The medal, designed by Paul Manship, was created by the National Audubon Society to give recognition to eminent conservationists. The only previous recipient was Dr. H. H. Bennett, chief of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service.

INVESTIGATION INDICATES AN OVERPOPULATION OF DEER IN 13 AREAS OF VIRGINIA

An investigation by James W. Engle, Jr., graduate student in the Wildlife Research Unit at V. P. I., indicates that an overpopulation of deer exists in 13 areas of Virginia.

As defined by this study, an overpopulation area is one in which the deer are inflicting damage on the forest vegetation, or an area in which agricultural crops are being damaged to such a point that the deer are interfering with a farmer's method of obtaining a livelihood, even though the deer in the locality may not be exerting an appreciable pressure on the native vegetation.

The investigation shows that in most cases deer damage is prevalent on these areas only during certain seasons of the year and that only particular types of crops are affected. This does not mean that deer numbers are necessarily getting out of hand. Farmers can take remedial measures by obtaining permission from their county game warden.

These deer damages are to be expected but they can be diminished by instigating proper management measures to provide the animals adequate forage on the uncultivated lands.

THE LAW EXPLAINED

QUESTION: Is it required by law that a big game tag be attached to all deer and bear kills?

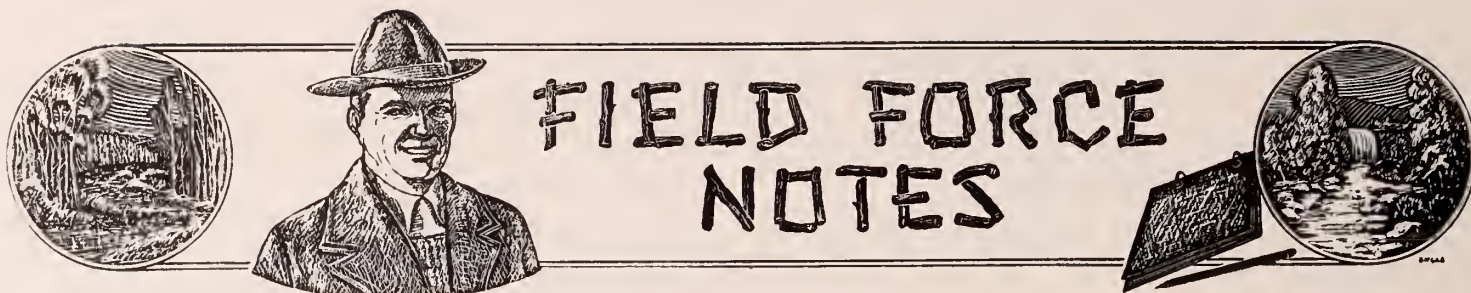
ANSWER: Yes. The animal must be taken immediately to a big game checking station where the tag must be attached. No person shall destroy the identity of any big game unless and until it has been tagged and checked.

QUESTION: Is a resident of a county required to have a Virginia deer and bear stamp to hunt bear or deer in that county?

ANSWER: No, if he is a resident or a legal voter of the county.

QUESTION: A landowner has posted his land and has put up posted signs thereon. He tells a hunter that it is all right for him to hunt. Is it lawful for the hunter to hunt on the landowner's property?

ANSWER: No, not unless the landowner gives him written permission.



Kesterson Assumes Duties as Chief of Law Enforcement Division

M. Wheeler Kesterson of Ewing, Virginia, officially took over as Chief of the Game Commission's Law Enforcement Division on January 1, 1950.



M. WHEELER KESTERSON

Mr. Kesterson was born at Cumberland Gap, Virginia, and received his education in Powell Valley and at Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee. He spent a number of years in the north-western United States, but returned to Powell Valley in 1920.

For the past 11 years Mr. Kesterson has been supervising game warden for the southwest district. He has established an enviable record in his untiring efforts to restore wildlife to Virginia. Personnel of the Law Enforcement Division have been performing outstanding work in the past, and under the new leader's supervision sportsmen can look forward to continued accomplishments in the enforcement of game and fish laws.

Five Members Added to 'Flying Squadron'

Five additional conservation officers have been added to the Law Enforcement Division's 'Flying Squadron'. The new additions to the staff are as follows: John Heflin, Potomac district; George W. Hottle, northwestern district; Harry King, Tidewater district; Andrew Burns, Piedmont district; and Lawrence Burton, southwest district.

The 'Flying Squadron' is now composed of 15 men who travel over the entire State. They work to apprehend game and fish law violators wherever the need is greatest. Due to the fact that their activities cannot be predicted by violators, their effectiveness is greatly enhanced.

Haysi Sportsmen's Club Completes Lake Project

The Haysi Sportsmen's Club in Dickinson County has completed their most recent conservation project, a 4-acre lake located 7 miles southeast of Haysi. Final costs of this project exceeded \$2,000.

The construction of this lake was unique in that more than half of the labor was volunteered by members of the Club. In addition, the active organization is planning the construction of a clubhouse and picnic grounds at the lake.

Virginia Dog Wins National Pheasant Championship

Sam's Madison Jake, liver and white pointer dog owned by R. Otis Carpenter, originally a resident of Virginia, recently captured the 24th Annual National Pheasant Championship held near Buffalo, New York.

Mr. Carpenter, who now lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, stated that Jake was whelped and trained in Madison County, Virginia. The dog is a son of Sam's Maryland Jake out of Lady Madison.

Carpenter has shipped Jake to Tennessee to be put into shape for the National Quail Championship at Grand Junction, Tennessee, in February.



Photo courtesy R. O. Carpenter

Sam's Madison Jake, winner of the 24th Annual National Pheasant Championship.

Annual Deer Antler and Bear Head Contest Held

The ninth annual contest to determine the best set of deer antlers and the best bear head bagged in Virginia in the 1948 hunting season was held in Richmond on November 5.

The contest for deer and bear bagged east of the Blue Ridge was held on October 29 by the Virginia Peninsula Sportsmen's Association, while the best trophies taken west of the Blue Ridge were judged by the Augusta Izaak Walton League Chapter. Winners of these two contests met in Richmond to vie for State-wide honors.

Melvin Wheeler of Deerfield won first in the deer antler contest for a deer bagged in Augusta County, W. N. Beale of Suffolk took top honors in the bear head division for the second straight year. His bear was taken from Dismal Swamp both times. Trophies, prizes and certificates were awarded for eight outstanding sets of antlers and three bear heads.

The Commission wishes to encourage all hunt clubs and sportsmen's groups throughout the State to sponsor local championships. These winners can then be entered in regional contests and may later come to Richmond to compete with trophies from every region in Virginia. Clubs desiring information on the instigation of local contests should contact Chester Phelps, here at the Game Commission.

Another State-wide contest will be held next year. The Commission hopes to have a much larger number of trophies in competition.



The Camera Shop, Staunton

Melvin A. Wheeler of Deerfield admires the head of the best deer killed in Virginia in 1948. Wheeler bagged the deer in Augusta County.

Bird Dog Field Trials Attract Wide Interest

Prior to the opening of the general hunting season bird dog enthusiasts in Virginia and from neighboring states gathered each week to run their dogs in one of Virginia's famous field trials.



Staff photo by Crawford

Anthony Imbesi poses Beau Mead recent winner of the All Age Stake of the Virginia Amateur Field Trials.

Trials held during the month of November included: Halifax Sportsmen's Club Trial at Halifax, Virginia; Northern Neck Amateur Field Trials at Warsaw; Virginia Amateur Trials in Louisa County; and Hampton Roads Tidewater Trial at Camp Peary.

This was the first year that the Hampton Roads Tidewater Association had held their trials at Camp Peary. The Commission, in its efforts to cooperate with sportsmen of the State, made a portion of Camp Peary available for the trial.

Gentle Deer

S. R. Stanford, game warden of Gloucester County, recently brought in an interesting account of a wild deer which was unbelievably tame even out in the forest.

Stanford said that Raymond Sears, a sawmill owner in Gloucester County, and a friend recently rode out in the county to look over a tract of timber. Upon reaching the area in question Sears dismounted and told his friend to meet him with the car on the other side.

When Sears had made his way almost to the other edge of the timber he jumped a big buck which "took off in high gear." Upon investigating the spot from which

the deer had jumped Sears was much surprised to find another buck lying there looking up at him. After he rustled leaves in an effort to frighten the animal, the buck ran a little way, but stopped and came walking back to the much surprised man. Sears rubbed the deer's nose and head then called for his friends to come into the woods.

When the deer heard the other man coming, he bounded away through the brush. Sears told his friend what had happened but his words fell on unbelieving ears. They both thought they were seeing things when the same buck came stepping lightly back to them to receive a double share of petting.

This is indeed strange for a wild deer to act in this manner. Warden Stanford said that no deer had been released in that area lately, so it was in all probability a completely wild animal.

Reward Offered for Lost Setter

A reward of \$25 is offered by George Gehrken, District Game Technician of Franklin, Virginia, for information leading to the recovery of his bird dog. The dog's name is Jack, and he is a 45-pound black and white English setter with an old break in his left hip. He was last seen near McKenney in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. Information concerning this dog should be sent to George Gehrken, Box 121, Franklin, Virginia.

Retiring Warden Richardson Honored by Virginia Peninsula Sportsmen's Association.



Photo by M. Ritger

Retiring warden Lightfoot Richardson receives an engraved pitcher from Tom Richardson of Newport News. The pitcher was presented to warden Richardson by the Virginia Peninsula Sportsmen's Association in appreciation for his loyal service.

Ronald T. Speers Heads Special Services Section

Ronald T. Speers is now heading the Special Services Section of the Game Commission's Education Division. He is from Kennebunkport, Maine, and holds a degree in



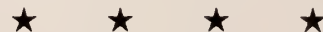
Staff photo by Crowford

Ronald T. Speers, new head of Education Division's Special Services Section.

wildlife conservation from the University of Maine. His past experience in public relations work with Outdoor Maine, Inc., together with his educational background, make Ronald well fitted for the new responsibility.

The head of the new Special Services Section will tour the State in a mobile unit equipped with motion picture projector, public address system, slide projector, phonograph equipment, conservation displays, and a variety of pamphlets and posters on wildlife conservation. Speers will visit schools, sportsmen's clubs, civic organizations, fairs, and other public gatherings where he will present lectures supplemented with entertainment from the mobile unit.

The Commission believes that the work of the Special Services Section will be a big step towards putting wildlife conservation across to the public.



COMING NEXT MONTH

ELEVEN YEARS OF WILDLIFE RESTORATION

by R. M. RUTHERFORD, *Chief,
Branch of Federal Aid,
Fish and Wildlife Service.*

BOBWHITES ON THE RISE

by VERNE E. DAVISON, *Chief,
Regional Biology Division,
Soil Conservation Service.*



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**THE
THIRD ANNUAL
\$1000⁰⁰**

WILDLIFE ESSAY CONTEST
ends Feb. 28, 1950

IT'S EASY TO WIN!

Because students will compete only against other students throughout the State in their own grade level. ALSO, there will be seven prizes ranging from \$5 to \$50 awarded in each grade, five through 12.

**TEACHERS:
FREE REFERENCE
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WRITE Wildlife Essay Contest Headquarters,
Box 1642, Richmond 13, Virginia for refer-
ence material. We will rush you such
material as we have and will include a list
of other possible sources.

Follow these easy CONTEST RULES now!

1. Essays must be submitted through the school participating and each essay must contain a minimum of 500 words. The general theme of wildlife conservation should be stressed, although contestants may elect to develop their wildlife themes around any one or all of the following: soil, woods, waters, and man. Specific titles rest with the student.
2. Each entry should bear the following information in the upper right-hand corner of each essay: name sex, age, grade, address, school, county, and teacher.
3. Students of Virginia schools, grades 5-12 inclusive, will be eligible to enter this contest.
4. All essays must be mailed to ESSAY CONTEST HEADQUARTERS, Box 1642, Richmond, Virginia. Deadline for submission of entries is midnight, February 28, 1950. Each school must mail essays from all grades at one time.
5. No papers will be returned and the decision of the judges will be final. Each sponsoring organization will appoint two conservationists to serve on the judging committee.

57 prizes

Eight grand prizes, \$50 each, one for each grade, totaling	\$400
Eight second prizes, \$25 each, one for each grade, totaling	\$200
Eight third prizes, \$15 each, one for each grade, totaling	\$120
Sixteen honorable mention prizes, \$10 each, two for each grade, totaling	\$160
Sixteen special mention prizes, \$5 each, two for each grade, totaling	\$ 80
One school prize, best response	\$ 40
Grand Total	\$1000

**Hand in your
essay now!**






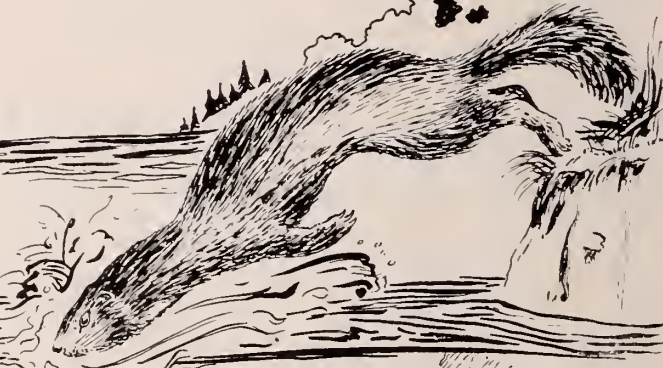
FEW ANIMALS BESIDES
GREAT HORNED OWLS
WILL ATTACK A MINK

Mink

ALTHOUGH A MERCILESS
KILLER -- THE MINK IS
DEVOTED TO ITS YOUNG



MINK OFTEN LIVE IN THE
DEN OF A MUSKRAT AFTER
EATING THE FORMER OWNER



AT HOME ON LAND OR IN
WATER -- HIS VARIED DIET
INCLUDES MICE AND FISH

